

National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

at LEARNING POINT ASSOCIATES

Welcome to the Webinar!

SEA Communities of Practice: Defining High-Quality Charter Schools

We will be starting soon.



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The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and administered by Learning Point Associates under contract number ED-04-CO-0109/0004.



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SEA Communities of Practice: Defining High-Quality Charter Schools

July 21, 2010



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Presenters

Carol Cohen

Senior Research Associate, WestEd

Barbara Moscinski and Erica Cervine

Charter School Office at the New York State Education Department

Maureen Murphy

Director of Charter Accountability, Charter Schools Institute
at the State University of New York

About the Charter School Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with Learning Point Associates, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Agenda

Carol Cohen

- Overview of indicator: Defining High-Quality Charter Schools
- Review of the U.S. Department of Education's expectations for performance on this indicator

Barbara Moscinski, Erica Cervine, and Maureen Murphy

- Overview of best practices related to the definition of high-quality charter schools in New York

Overview of Indicator: Defining High-Quality Charter Schools

Carol Cohen

Senior Research Associate
WestEd

Promoting High-Quality through the CSP

- A focus on high quality is reflected throughout the ED/WestEd monitoring system
 - Indicator 3.1: The SEA's application assessment and award system supports the creation of high quality charter schools in the State
 - Section 1: Subgrant Application and Award Process
 - Section 2: Outreach, Guidance, & Technical Assistance
 - Section 4: Monitoring
- The goal is a consistent, operational definition of high quality across a State's CSP program

Promoting High Quality in the Subgrant Application

- Definition of a charter school
- Required federal descriptions and assurances
- Alignment between subgrant and charter applications

Definition of a charter school (Sec. 5210)

Exemptions from significant State and local rules	Created and operated as a public school
Operates under a specific set of educational objectives	Provides a program of elementary and/or secondary education
Nonsectarian	Tuition-Free
Complies with Federal laws	School of choice and usage of lottery
Complies with Federal and State audit requirements	Health and Safety compliance
Operates in accordance with State law	Has a written performance contract with authorizer

Required Federal Descriptions and Assurances

Educational Program	Charter School Management
Subgrantee objectives and progress measures	Parent and community involvement
Administrative relationship between school and authorizer	Continued operation
Waivers	Use of funds
School and community outreach	Assurances of satisfactory progress
Assurance on evaluating the program	IDEA compliance
Dissemination activities	Other

Building Quality through Application TA

- Grant training
- Guidance within the application and rubric itself
- Application negotiations
 - Budget and budget amendment process
 - MN Ready to Open Meeting

Promoting High Quality in the Subgrant Award Process

- Rewarding quality and incenting the State's priorities
 - Scoring rubric
 - Preference points
 - Cutoff point
- Review process
 - Reviewer quality, recruitment and training
 - Consistent application of review rubric
 - Transparency

OGTA within the Monitoring System and the Relationship to Quality

Monitoring Indicators	Related Quality Aspects...
2.1— Inform about the CSP grant program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial/operational health • Innovativeness • Independence • Success and sustainability • Educational program/services • Others...
2.2— Inform about Federal funds	
2.3— Ensure receipt of Federal funds	
2.4— Disseminate best practices	
2.5— Afford autonomy & flexibility	
2.6— Assure sustainability	
2.7— Ensure transfer of student records	

Subgrant monitoring: More than just a responsibility...

- Subgrantee monitoring is an *opportunity* for States to play an *active* role in the creation, support, and continued operations of high quality charter schools.
 - Set expectations/standards for quality
 - Monitor performance
 - Identify strengths and weakness
 - Provide targeted technical assistance

Strong Monitoring Systems are..

- **Aligned** to state expectations/standards for quality
- **Focused** on performance, finance, and governance
- **Responsive** to findings and needs for technical assistance
- **Relevant** to phase of development (timely)
- **Meaningful** to all parties involved

Examples of Focus Areas of State Monitoring Systems

Educational program—curriculum, instruction, assessment	Learning environment
Student achievement objectives	Academic performance
Marketing and admissions policies and procedures	Individuals with disabilities
Budget	Fiscal management
Management plan	Organizational effectiveness
Board governance	Parent and community involvement and support
Qualifications of teachers and staff	Professional development

Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Best Practices in New York

Barbara Moscinski and Erica Cervine
Charter School Office at the
New York State Education Department

NYS Indicator 3.1

- NYS Education Department and the Trustees of the State University of New York partnership as designed by a Memorandum of Understanding
- Definition of high-quality charter schools as per NYS Education Law Section 2851(2)(a-x)
- Alignment of definition and CSP grant awards in accordance with Section 5204 of the ESEA.

NYSED and SUNY BoT MOU

- Education Law, specifically Article 56 – Charter Schools is applicable to all charter schools in New York State.
- RFP and rubric review by NYSED, as the SEA
- Process between NYSED and SUNY BoT

Definition of high-quality charter schools

- Education Law Section 2851(2)(a-x)
- Information provided by applicants when asking to establish a charter school
- Review and monitoring process to ensure high-quality charter schools

Alignment of definition and CSP grant awards in accordance with Section 5204 of the ESEA

- RFP and rubric development and review
- Q and A period
- Coordination with Grants Finance and Contracts Unit
- Authorizer approval for grant application submission
- Provision of technical assistance to eligible applicants

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance for Charter School Applicants

- NYSED provides technical assistance to all charter school applicants.
- Regional Liaisons
- Technical Assistance Advisory
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Clarification Letters

Regional Liaisons

- The NYSED Charter School Office assigns each charter school applicant a regional liaison based upon geographic location.
- These liaisons work with the applicant throughout the application process to ensure the application is in alignment with all federal and state education laws.
- The same liaison also maintains a relationship with the school once the charter is issued.

Technical Assistance Advisory (TAA)

- The TAA clarifies several key issues pertaining to the content of charter school applications (for both initial and renewal charter applications) submitted directly to the Board of Regents.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- The FAQs, which are posted on the Charter School Office website, offer charter applicants and operators clarification regarding many aspects of charter school law which include:
 - Definition of a charter school
 - Attendance
 - Complaint Procedure
 - Special Education
 - SAVE and Fingerprinting and Child Abuse legislation
 - Minimum Standards
 - Student Enrollment
 - Student Services
 - Employee Issues
 - Accountability

Clarification Letters

- During the application process the regional liaison will work with an applicant to ensure the applicant is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- The liaison will send the applicant clarification letters that highlight areas of concern or non compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- This process provides applicants and opportunity to clarify and refine areas of concern prior to the award of a charter.

Websites

- NYSED Charter School Office

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/>

- SUNY Charter Schools Institute

<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/>

- NYSED Charter School Office TAA

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/documents/TAAREv13-7-08.doc>

- NYSED FAQ's

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/faq.html>

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Best Practices in New York

Maureen Murphy

Director of Charter Accountability
Charter Schools Institute at the
State University of New York

**SEA Communities of Practice:
Defining High-Quality Charter Schools**

NYS Indicator 3.1

SUNY Component of the SED/SUNY Partnership

**Presented by: Maureen Murphy, Institute
Director of Charter Accountability**



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

About SUNY and SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

- **SUNY is the largest University-based authorizer in the country**
 - 79 charter schools serving over 25,000 students
- **The SUNY Board of Trustees created the Charter Schools Institute to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities as an authorizer**
- **SUNY's approach to authorizing focuses on outcomes**
- **SUNY is committed to approving only those schools with the highest likelihood of improving student achievement, especially for students at risk of academic failure**

SUNY Academic Accountability Plans

- **Establish specific student achievement goals and measures that a charter school agrees to meet that are tied to the State testing program**
- **Provide the school's board with a powerful tool for oversight**
- **Provide school staff with clear expectations for performance**
- **Provide parents and the school community with a means to hold the school accountable**
- **Serve as a vital tool for tracking a school's progress toward renewal**

Purpose of Accountability Plans

- **Establish clear goals for each school, as required by state law**
- **Set high standards for charter schools**
- **Create a level playing field for all charter schools**
- **Hold charter schools to the same state and federal standards as all other public schools (i.e., state's NCLB accountability system)**

State Standards and Assessments

- **SUNY authorized charter schools are held to the same state standards as other public schools**
- **State assessments are designed to measure student performance against state standards**
- **State assessments are the only way to compare charter school performance to that of other public schools**
- **NCLB requirements apply to all public schools, including charter schools**

Goals and Measures

- **Characteristics of Goals**
 - General, declarative statements about long-term expectations for the school
 - Follow from the school's mission statement and key design elements in the school's charter
 - Address the question: how do you know if the school has succeeded?

Goals and Measures

- **Characteristics of Measures**
 - Emphasize outcomes rather than inputs
 - Focus on student achievement as a result of the school's programmatic and organizational practices
 - Specify what is necessary to achieve a particular goal
 - Reflect long-term objectives that the school expects to achieve by renewal, as well as annual short-term objectives.

Goals and Measures

Evaluating Goals

- Meeting a goal is based on the collective evaluation of all of its measures, taking into consideration the relative difficulty of each measure
- The Institute does not use a strict formula to evaluate goals, e.g., achieving four out of five measures
- Using a combination of absolute, comparative and growth measures allows the Institute to both set high standards and consider the uniqueness of each school

SUNY Required Goals and Measures

- **Rationale for Required Goals and Measures**
 - Makes clear SUNY's high standards
 - Levels playing field for comparison to other schools
 - Allows for a common set of standards at renewal
- **School's uniqueness and key design elements can still be expressed in optional goals and measures**

SUNY Required Goals and Measures

- **Required Academic Goals for K-8 Schools**
 - English language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Studies
 - NCLB

SUNY Required Goals and Measures

- **K-8 ELA & Math Measures**
 - 75 percent proficient (Absolute)
 - Achieve Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) (Absolute)
 - Outperform local school district (Comparative)
 - Outperform demographically similar schools state-wide (Comparative)
 - Cut by half difference between last year's percent proficient and 75 percent this year (Growth)

SUNY Required Goals and Measures

- **NCLB Measure for All Schools**
 - Applies to all public schools
 - Based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 - Determined by State Education Department
 - Low bar: most schools are in good standing each year

Optional Goals and Measures

- **Rationale**

- To highlight priorities in the school's mission
- To mobilize the school community to address a unique aspect of the program
- To demonstrate the effectiveness of specific aspects of the instructional program
- To help in monitoring program implementation in lower grades (i.e., K-2 in elementary school and 9th & 10th grades in high school)
- To support school improvement efforts

Optional Goals and Measures

- **Considerations**

- Schools may choose to include other academic, organizational or non-academic goals
- Optional goals must each include at least one outcome measure to determine goal attainment
- Schools may add optional measures to their required goals
- Schools are obligated to collect data and report results on their progress toward these optional goals and measures
- Optional goals do not supersede the criteria used by the Institute to evaluate the educational program, fiscal soundness or organizational viability

Development Process

- **Accountability Plan Development**
 1. The Institute provides information and written guidance on developing an Accountability Plan
 2. The board identifies areas for optional goals and measures
 3. The school submits an initial draft to the Institute
 4. The school and Institute use an iterative process to reach agreement on a final Accountability Plan
 5. The school's board approves the Accountability Plan
 6. The Institute issues a Letter of Incorporation of the Accountability Plan into the charter

The Board's Role

- **Identify priorities based on the school's mission and vision**
- **Review required goal statements**
 - Review optional measures for required goals
- **Identify areas for optional goals**
 - Review optional goal statements
 - Review optional measures for optional goals
- **Approve Accountability Plan**
- **Monitor school progress toward Plan goals**

Use of Accountability Plans

- **Annual Reporting**
 - The Charter School Act requires schools to submit annual reports that address, among other things, their progress towards goals
 - Schools submit annual Accountability Plan Progress Reports to meet this requirement, due August 1 each year
 - The Institute has developed a Progress Report template to help schools address the goals and measures in their Accountability Plan

Use of Accountability Plans

- **Institute Follow up**

- The Institute collects data from the school's Plan Progress Reports to conduct Performance Evaluations
 - Performance Evaluations examine the school's success in meeting its Accountability Plan goals and its prospects for renewal
- The Institute periodically attends school board meetings to present and discuss the Performance Evaluation, which is based on a holistic interpretation of the multiple measures for each goal
 - The Institute interviews boards during annual school visits to evaluate their oversight of the school and its progress towards achieving the goals in its Accountability Plan

Development Process

- **Plans for Subsequent Charter Periods**
 - Schools submit a new Accountability Plan as part of their renewal application
 - The Institute works with schools during the renewal process to finalize their new Accountability Plan for incorporation into a new charter

Quick Reference Links

- **SUNY Academic Accountability Plans**
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsAccountability.htm>
- **SUNY Oversight and Evaluation**
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsPubsReports.htm>
- **SUNY Charter Renewal Policies**
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/CharterRenewalHandbook3rdEdition.pdf>

Questions?



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Guiding Questions: Defining High-Quality Charter Schools

- Describe the process that your state used to determine the definition for high-quality charter schools.
- What are the elements of your state's definition of high-quality charter schools?
- In what ways have you provided technical assistance to prospective applicants?
- How is your review or scoring rubric aligned with the definition?
- How is your assessment and award process aligned with the definition?

Guiding Questions: Challenges, Successes, Lessons Learned

- What are the major challenges you have faced with defining high-quality charter schools?
- What advice or lessons learned would you like to share with other states?
- Are there supports or resources that the National Charter School Resource Center can provide to assist you with this process?

Thank you for participating.

- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/events>
(Click on “Past Events” at the left side of your screen.)
- The next webinar will be held on Wednesday, August 18, 2010.

National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

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